Corporatisation of Agriculture

176. SHRI SATISH PRADHAN: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news article which appeared in the Indian Express dated the 9th January, 2002, under the caption, "Our future is in the forests-corporatisation of agriculture, as some think tanks suggest, will completely ravage our economy"; and

(b) if so, what is Government's response thereto and what corrective steps have been taken or are proposed to be taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI HUKUMDEO NARA YAN YADA V): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The Government is encouraging afforestation through various schemes in forestry, agro-forestry and social forestry. National Forestry Action Plan envisages *inter-alia* protection of existing forests, improving forest productivity, institutional strengthening and capacity building. The emphasis is also on development of non wood forests. There is no tax levied by the Central Government on non-timber forest produce. The Ministry of Environment and Forests is also promoting participatory forest management and there is no bar for the Joint Forest Management Committee to enter into the contracts with those who can sell.

Pending Agricultural Projects of Gujarat

177. SHRI ANANTRAY DEVSHANKER DAVE: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether certain Comprehensive Agriculture Development Projects of Gujarat like Ecological Restoration, Reclamation of Alkali Soil, Coastal Salinity Ingress Prevention Scheme are pending with the Ministry;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) by when these projects are likely to be cleared?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI HUKUMDEO NARA YAN YADA V): (a) to (c) The Project proposal on "Ecological Restoration through Integrated Development Programme in Saraswati and Shetrunji river basin" of Gujarat State has been forwarded to Department of Economic Affairs, Ministry of Finance with recommendation to